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ABSTRACT

This document summarizes findings of a statewide evaluation of 11 pilot and 19 coaching-model schools participating in a Louisiana accelerated schools program. This 1995-96 evaluation aimed to determine whether the project met its stated objectives related to numbers of participants and types of services provided; ascertain the project's effects on school discipline, parental involvement, and student achievement; and ascertain the status of second- and fourth-generation schools on accelerated schools process indicators (powerful learning, unity of purpose, values, empowerment/responsibility, building on strengths, taking stock, vision, inquiry process, governance, and philosophy). Data were collected from various sources: a survey to measure process indicators, a feedback information survey completed by schools, project-related documentation, and open-ended interviews with project staff. Results showed that the project met its participation and service-provision objectives. Results for parental involvement, school discipline, and student achievement show consistent improvement over the life of the project. At least 60 percent of schools showed positive gains over tine on 2 standardized achievement tests (LEAP and CAT). The schools process survey showed that second- and fourth-generation schools were making progress on most indicators. Included are five tables. (MLH)

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A Statewide Evaluation of Accelerated Schools

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Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago, IL. Request for copies should be directed to Dr. Eugene Kennedy, 111 Peabody Hall, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA 70803

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Objectives of the Evaluation

1. To determine the extent to which the project met its stated objectives related to number of participants and types of services provided.

2. To ascertain the impact of the project on school discipline, parental involvement, and student achievement.

3. To ascertain the status of second and fourth generation schools on the accelerated schools process indicators.

Goals and Objectives of the Project

As presented in the Statewide Program Description, the stated objectives of the project are as follows:

1. To support 30 schools from 19 Louisiana school districts in the Accelerated Schools transformation process.

2. To serve teachers, students, and other participants including administrators, staff, and parents in the participating school communities.

3. To provide technical assistance to 11 pilot and 19 coaching model schools in developing skills and processes to implement the transformation to an accelerated school.

4. To provide the pilot and coaching model schools with periodic technical assistance in powerful learning, cadre leadership, governance, and school based problem solving.

5. To help pilot and coaching model schools develop and sustain changes in student achievement, parental involvement, and school discipline.

6. To assist six first year coaching schools in the initial phase of transformation by engaging coaches in activities that will help them build capacity for change in the school.

7. To develop a professional network support system for teachers and administrators implementing the accelerated schools process.

8. To show gain scores in academic achievement as measured by LEAP in 50% of the total students who were enrolled in the project over a three year period.

Evaluation Guidelines

The stated guidelines for evaluation of the project were as follows:

1. The evaluation will report the status of the first and second year coaching schools and the fourth and fifth year pilot schools.

2. The evaluation of first year coaching schools will assess accelerated schools process indicators such as establishing a vision, taking stock, unity of purpose, shared decision making, building on strengths, and governance.

3. Indicators to be evaluated for second year coaching schools will include changes in student discipline and parental involvement.

4. Evaluation of fourth year pilot schools will include status of accelerated schools process implementation.

5. Evaluation of fifth year pilot schools will include changes in indicators such as academic achievement, student discipline, and parental involvement.

6. Results of this design will be reported by schools in addition to the program evaluation data.

Data Sources

Data were collected from a variety of sources for purposes of this evaluation:

1. A survey was designed to measure the accelerated schools process indicators (see Appendix C). This survey was administered in second year coaching schools and fourth year pilot schools. The indicators addressed on this surveys were as follows: Powerful Learning, Unity of Purpose, Values, Empowerment Coupled with Responsibility, Building on Strengths, Taking Stock, Vision, Inquiry Process, Governance, and Philosophy.

2. All schools associated with the project completed the Accelerated Schools Feedback Information 1995-1996 Survey (see Appendix B). This survey gathered data on the following: Number of Participants, Cadres of Your School, Family Involvement, School Discipline, and Student Achievement.

3. Project staff provided extensive project-related documentation to the evaluation team.

4. Open-ended interviews were held with project staff throughout the 1995-96 year.

RESULTS

Results for Participants

Based on documentation provided by project staff, a total of 32 schools started the 1995-96 school year with the Louisiana Accelerated Schools for At-Risk Children project. However, due to financial and other constraints two schools withdrew from the project during the course of the year: Ross Elementary in Acadia Parish and Corpus Christie in the Archdiocese of New Orleans. The remaining 30 schools are presented in Table 1. These schools are clustered by generation, or the year in which they entered the project. Also, this table reports the number of students involved in the project for the 1995-96 school year. Based on these results, objectives 1 and 2 were met during the 1995-96 school year.

Results for Parental Involvement

Parental involvement is defined in terms of parent volunteers per 100 students, parent volunteer visitations per 100 students, and parents attending PTA/PTO meetings per 100 students. As presented in these tables, these components of parental involvement show consistent improvement over the life of the project for each generation of schools.

Results for School Discipline

The components of school discipline presented are as follows: Discipline referrals per 100 students, discipline related conferences per 100 students, suspensions per 100 students, and expulsions per 100 students. In most instances, discipline referrals and conferences show a decrease over the life of the project. The expulsion rates for schools in the project are uniformly low and rarely above 0.0 percent. Suspensions occurred with greater frequency than expulsions, but they are also consistently low.

Results for Student Achievement

These results are presented for CAT/5 Total Battery, grades 4 and 6, and LEAP language and math subscores, grades 3 and 5. In the majority of cases, for schools in the project, the median percent of students meeting the standard for the LEAP tests are within 5 percentage points of the State percent meeting the standard. In many instances, this median of the accelerated schools exceeds the State percent. The results for the CAT/5 are similarly positive. In the majority of cases the median for schools in the project are within 5 to 10 percentiles of the 50th national percentile. For schools that serve large percentages of low income students these results are impressive. Specific results for student achievement were as follows:

LEAP Language Arts, Grade 3.	Sixty-six percent of the schools either showed positive gains over time or were above the typical State passing rate of 90% 1996.
LEAP Mathematics, Grade 3.	Sixty-one percent either showed positive gains over time or were above the typical State passing rate of 90% in 1996.
LEAP Language Arts, Grade 5.	Fifty-nine percent of the schools either showed positive gains over time or were above the typical State passing rate of 90% in 1996.
LEAP Mathematics, Grade 5.	Sixty-eight percent either showed positive gains over time or were above the typical State passing rate of 90% in 1996.
LEAP OVERALL RESULTS.	Sixty-four percent of the schools either showed positive gains over time or were above the typical State passing rate of 90% in 1996.
CAT Total Battery, Grade 4.	Sixty-three percent either showed positive gains over time or were above the 50th national percentile in 1996.
CAT Total Battery, Grade 6.	Eighty-two percent either showed positive gains over time or were above the 50th national percentile in 1996.
CAT Overall Results.	Seventy-one percent of the schools either showed positive gains over time or were above the 50th national percentile in 1996.

The achievement results reported above do not include the two non-public schools in the project: St. Alphonsus and Our Lady of Lourdes. However, St. Alphonsus reported that 100% of their students were promoted in grades 3 and 5 over the past three years. Similarly, Our Lady of Lourdes reported significant improvement in achievement, as measured by the Stanford Achievement test, in three of its four grades.

Result of Accelerated Schools Process Survey

Second and fourth generation schools completed the Accelerated Schools Process Indicator Survey described above. For both generations, the results are positive indicating that schools in the project have made and are making progress in the developmental stages described in the accelerated schools documentation. Nevertheless, two areas of challenge for fourth generation schools, reflected by low average scores, appear to be Empowerment Coupled with Responsibility and Unity of Purpose. Similarly, an area of concern for second generation schools is Empowerment Coupled with Responsibility.

CONCLUSIONS

1. To what extent was the project successful in meeting its objectives related to the number of participants and types of services provided to participating schools?

   - A total of 30 schools from 19 school districts participated in the project during the 1995-96 school year.

   - A total of 13,987 students; 871 teachers; 47 administrators; and 508 school staff and others (e.g., parents) participated in the project during the 1995-96 school year. It is estimated that more than 75% of these students were recipients of free or reduced price school lunches.

   - Students, teachers, administrators, school staff, and others were provided with technical assistance and training throughout the 1995-96 school year.

2. What was the impact of the project on school discipline, parental involvement, and student achievement?

   - Discipline referrals and discipline related conferences showed significant decreases over the life of the project for participating schools.

   - Suspensions and expulsions of students at participating schools were uniformly low. In most instances there were no expulsions.

   - Parental volunteers per 100 students, parental visitations per 100 students, and parental PTA/PTO participation per 100 students each showed significant increases for each generation of schools participating in the project.

   - For both grade 3 and grade 5, LEAP Language Arts and Math results were positive. Overall, 64% of the participating schools showed positive gains in the percent of students meeting the standard or their percent meeting the standard was above the typical state passing rate of 90% in 1996. This result for participating schools exceeded the stated project goal of 50%.

   - For both grade 4 and grade 6, overall 71% of the participating schools showed positive increases or were above the 50th national

percentile in 1996 on the CAT Total Battery.

3. What was the status of second and fourth generation schools on the accelerated schools process indicators at the end of the 1995-96 school year?

   * For both second and fourth generation schools, the overall mean for the accelerated schools process indicators was 3.27. This result indicates that participating schools had implemented and were sustaining the milestones of the accelerated schools process.

Table 2.A
Parental Involvement: First Generation Schools

Parent Volunteers per 100 Students						
	1990-91	1991-92	1992-93	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96
Median	0.88	1.47	2.81	25.01	14.62	20.31
Range	0.88-0.88	1.47-1.47	2.81-2.81	3.38-46.6	7.22-20.4	7.32-34.3
Parent Volunteer Visitations per 100 Students						
	1990-91	1991-92	1992-93	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96
Median	0.59	0.29	2.25	25.01	36.55	89.71
Range	0.59-0.59	0.29-0.29	2.25-2.25	3.38-46.6	5.42-81.5	11.54-236
Parents Attending PTA/PTO Meetings per 100 Students						
	1990-91	1991-92	1992-93	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96
Median	1.47	2.06	1.40	9.87	34.80	69.35
Range	1.47-1.47	2.06-2.06	1.40-1.40	3.38-16.3	3.61-83.8	10.0-94.3

Table 3.A
School Discipline: First Generation Schools

Discipline Referrals per 100 Students						
	1990-91	1991-92	1992-93	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96
Median	2.50	4.23	2.93	12.27	25.38	48.81
Range	2.06-2.94	3.44-5.00	1.93-3.93	1.56-22.9	5.85-25.9	3.13-63.1
Discipline Related Conferences per 100 Students						
	1990-91	1991-92	1992-93	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96
Median	0.59	0.59	0.84	3.04	4.39	15.13
Range	0.59-0.59	0.59-0.59	0.84-0.84	3.04-3.04	1.44-23.8	1.54-40.2
Suspensions per 100 Students						
	1990-91	1991-92	1992-93	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96
Median	0.00	2.22	1.39	1.51	2.44	1.13
Range	0.00	0.00-6.64	0.00-14.2	0.00-5.40	0.00-17.8	0.00-27.8
Expulsions per 100 Students						
	1990-91	1991-92	1992-93	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96
Median	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.06
Range	0.00-	0.00-00.0	0.00-0.0	0.00-0.0	0.00-0.34	0.00-0.65

Table 4.A
Student Achievement: First Generation Schools

CAT Total Battery Percentile Rank for Grade Level 4						
	1990-91	1991-92	1992-93	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96
Median	0.00	30.90	29.80	30.00	38.30	33.00
Range		30.8-31.0	23.8-37.0	24.9-65.0	18.0-51.0	24.0-51.4
CAT Total Battery Percentile Rank for Grade Level 6						
Median	0.00	33.10	28.60	29.00	22.50	34.30
Range		33.1-33.1	26.5-31.5	29.0-37.0	22.0-33.5	34.0-36.5
LEAP Percent Passing for Grade 3 Language Arts						
Median	76.00	80.00	87.00	80.00	78.00	73.00
Range	70.0-82.0	73.0-96.0	68.0-98.0	67.0-100	52.0-93.0	41.0-100
LEAP Percent Passing for Grade 3 Math						
Median	85.00	83.00	73.00	78.00	75.00	78.00
Range	84.0-86.0	63.0-96.0	67.0-100	68.0-98.0	52.0-91.0	50.0-100
LEAP Percent Passing for Grade 5 Language Arts						
Median	78.5	87.00	90.00	67.00	77.00	62.00
Range	76.0-81.0	74.0-94.0	79.0-92.0	63.0-86.0	55.0-84.0	53.0-91.0
LEAP Percent Passing for Grade 5 Math						
Median	86.5	79.00	77.00	66.00	87.00	64.00
Range	78.0-95.0	73.0-100	72.0-95.0	49.0-74.0	64.0-93.0	59.0-91.0

a. Starting with the 1992-93 school year, the state NRT was changed from the CAT/Form F to the CAT/5.

Table 5.A
Accelerated Schools Process Indicators: Second Generation Schools

Accelerated Schools Process Indicator	Means	Stand. Dev.	N of Subj.
Powerful Learning	3.59	0.45	166
Unity of Purpose	3.18	0.62	166
Values	3.66	0.75	166
Empowerment Coupled with Responsibility	2.28	1.13	166
Building on Strengths	3.68	0.79	166
Taking Stock	3.73	0.84	166
Vision	3.71	0.91	164
Inquiry Process	3.39	0.42	166
Governance	3.16	0.36	166
Philosophy	3.26	0.58	166

Table 5.B
Accelerated Schools Process Indicators: Fourth Generation Schools

Accelerated Schools Process Indicator	Means	Stand. Dev.	N of Subj.
Powerful Learning	3.41	0.49	199
Unity of Purpose	2.76	0.80	199
Values	3.17	0.81	199
Empowerment Coupled with Responsibility	2.95	1.32	202
Building on Strengths	3.24	0.84	203
Taking Stock	3.39	0.86	203
Vision	3.36	0.94	201
Inquiry Process	3.20	0.47	203
Governance	3.16	0.45	203
Philosophy	3.34	0.70	202